

FREE THOUGHTS 5

UPON THE

PRESENT CRISIS,

IN WHICH ARE STATED THE

FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES

UPON WHICH ALONE

I R E L A N D

CAN, OR OUGHT TO AGREE TO ANY

FINAL SETTLEMENT

WITH

GREAT BRITAIN.

IN A LETTER FROM A
COUNTRY GENTLEMAN to the PEOPLE OF IRELAND.

by Chas. Sheridan
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FREE THOUGHTS

PRESENT

IN THE

FUNDAMENTAL PRINCIPLES



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FINAL SETTLEMENT

GRAND PRINCIPLE

COUNTRY GENTLEMEN AND THE PEOPLE OF IRELAND

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FRIENDS AND COUNTRYMEN,

I BELIEVE no man was ever less ambitious of appearing in print than I am—Nor should I, even at the present important crisis, have ventured to communicate my sentiments upon it, to the public, but from the earnest solicitations of some of my friends, whose partiality for me gives those sentiments more credit than perhaps they deserve.

Forgive the egotism with which I commence my correspondence with you—The talking of one's self is a fault common to authors and old men—It is with real concern I tell you, I have been long numbered among the latter; and now in my first attempt to rank among the former, it is not at my time of life to be expected I should be wholly exempt from a fault so commonly attendant on authorship.

Besides I can assure you, vanity has no share in my intreating some indulgence from you in this
B respect

respect—Every one knows it is not so much *what* is said, as by *whom* a thing is said, which gives it currency with the public. To judge of the soundness of any political doctrine; considered without reference to its author, certain qualities are necessary which a man can do very well without, when it is not the *doctrine*, but as is often the case, the *author* or political leader he adopts. The qualities to which I allude are principally three: First, Some general information upon the subjects in discussion. Secondly, A degree of quickness of conception; and thirdly, Some talent for reasoning. And though we are a nation of politicians, as these three commodities are not very common among us, the safest and indeed I think the best way, where either indolence or inability prevents a man from forming any opinions for himself, is to accept of one ready made; which he can at any time get gratis, from some celebrated politician or other, who if they have not the wisdom and the foresight recorded of the prophets, have at least the same zeal in propagating their doctrines. Now as I have not the good, or the bad luck, (I protest I know not which to call it) to be a celebrated politician, I am apprehensive I shall not be able to prevail upon persons, who are in the habits of pinning their faith upon the sleeves of other men, to adopt any ready-made opinions out of the following pages, unless they have some previous acquaintance with their author. Neither should I like to send my *first-born* into the world like a poor foundling, of whose parentage nothing is known, but should wish, in order to procure it a favourable reception, that my readers and I should become better acquainted. For this purpose I shall beg leave to give them a short account of my situation, character, and political opinions, that they may judge for themselves whether I deserve to have any followers
for

for the doctrines I shall lay down, respecting the principal subject of this letter.

You will not therefore attribute it to vanity, should I trespass on your patience a very short time longer, by making myself the hero of my own tale.—I have already hinted that I am somewhat advanced in the vale of years, though “that not much” in my *own opinion*, whatever my acquaintances may insinuate to the contrary—I am however arrived at that time of life, when a man, as he himself conceives at least, retaining the full vigour of his mental faculties, can exert them to the greater advantage, from its being the *only* vigour he does retain. When the hey-day of the blood is past, when varying desires cease to dissipate reflection, and craving passions to mislead the understanding; when no future prospects allure, and the mind’s eye with a reverted glance, takes a retrospective view of life; then surely it is, that opinion becomes most properly the pure result of judgment, unbiassed by the sway of our inclinations, and unwarped by the dictates of our interest—This is the only compensation Time makes for the depredations he commits; and I think it a compensation which has fallen to my lot.

I must inform my readers then, that having been early possessed of an independence more than adequate to gratify every wish even of my younger years, I indulged a natural disposition to indolence, which prevented my ever taking an active part on the political stage—I was however by no means an inattentive spectator—I became at least a speculative politician; and according to the adage, perhaps saw more of the game than those who were playing it.

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I have never paid court to any administration, for this plain reason, because I wanted nothing from them.—For the same reason I never enlisted in any popular party, because such a party can be of little or no use to a man who does not look for any favours from government. I am in some sort fitted to be a patriot, from having ever had a very indifferent opinion of ministers; and am entitled to be a courtier in one respect, namely, my entertaining pretty nearly the same sentiments, with respect to their opponents. I have at the same time no vulgar prejudices against either descriptions of men. The common cant that the generality of ministers are at all times ready to sacrifice the interests of their country, to their own lust of power, or greediness of emolument, so often urged by the vulgar and uninformed on the one hand, and the retorted charge of the no less vulgar and uninformed on the other, that patriots are ever ready to make the same sacrifices at the shrine of faction, I hold in equal contempt—If I have in general an indifferent opinion both of ministers and of their opponents, it is because I entertain the same sentiments of mankind at large: and as we have no other materials of which to form statesmen and patriots, I think it equally unjust and absurd, if I may be allowed the expression, to find fault with a *manufacture* only for those defects we all know to have been originally in the *raw material*. The fact is, whatever those defects inherent to man may be, there are certain situations which have a peculiar tendency to call them forth, and to increase, or at least render them more conspicuous. There are certain professions and trades, like those of an attorney, or a butcher, for instance, which to a proverb, are supposed to have particular effects on the disposition—Now in my opinion, statesmen and patriots are pretty much in the same predicament;

predicament; their very professions have naturally a tendency to ripen certain propensities, and expand certain vices, for which they are no more to be blamed, than trees or plants for being under the influence of climate. What I have been able to collect from reading and observation, respecting the influence of station and power upon the human mind, or in other words, the natural effects which a man's becoming a minister, produces upon his disposition, is as follows: *Imprimis*, finding his own personal consequence and dignity so much increased, this very naturally begets a proportional increase of the good opinion he before entertained of his own parts and judgment—He knows that to fill certain stations *well*, requires very extensive abilities—he is told by all the world, (that is to say, by the persons about him) that no man ever filled his station better; ergo, he has to a certainty very extensive abilities. He was formerly contradicted in company, and had often, in the opinion of the bye-standers, the worst of the argument—He now finds all the world, (I mean still the persons about him) are of his opinion—How then can he ever be in the wrong? Should a person in his company express any doubts concerning his positions, if he is a man of sense and politeness, he only furnishes the minister with an opportunity of displaying his superior abilities and information, and immediately becomes a convert; but should he happen to be of a mulish disposition, (a case which very rarely occurs among the companions of a minister) the rest of the company unanimously decide against the ill-mannered blockhead; declaring him to be the most wrong headed man alive: in which opinion, the minister acquiesces with great complacency—He is exposed indeed to have unwelcome truths told him in public, but then he has adopted an excellent rule. When persons agree
with

with him or speak in his favour, it is his maxim only to consider *what* is said, not *why* it is said : into the *motive* he never enquires. But when persons *disagree* with him, or speak *against* him or his measures ; it is part of his rule to reverse the maxim ; he then has no business to consider *what* has been said, but only *why* it has been said—and answering the argument by stating the motive, with the help of the words *disappointed ambition*, — *factionous views* — and *party spirit* (which possibly are very truly applied) he retains in triumph his own opinion.—Where then shall we find understandings so strong, or dispositions so humble, as to remain untainted by the infection of a situation, in which all things conspire to flatter vanity, and deceive judgment.

The first natural consequences therefore of a man's becoming a minister, consequences he can no more help, than he could the different temperature of his blood under a warm sun, than that to which he had been accustomed ; are to rate his own abilities *higher*, and those of the rest of the world *lower*, than he did before—to acquire consequently a new portion of self-sufficiency—a greater degree of impatience of contradiction ; and such a pertinacity of opinion, that having once adopted one, is with him, alone a sufficient reason for maintaining it—and he may be all this, though acting upon the purest principles, and with the best of views. But the misfortune is that these faults though innoxious or laughable only in private life, may be very fatal in a minister ; the self-sufficiency of one, who is only a *passenger* in a ship, is of very little consequence, he may fancy he understands navigation better than the sailors, aver they should steer north, when the course was south, and having once said so, persevere

severe in his opinion. The crew laugh at him and no harm is done—but should the man at the *helm* take the same freak in his head ; and adhere to it, with the same foolish obstinacy, I believe it would fare ill with the vessel. In the second place—the next effect I have to mention of a man's becoming a minister, is that, as the love of power is one of the most general passions implanted in the human breast, so power wears very different appearances when beheld in *other* hands, and when viewed in our *own*: this gives to all ministers a leaning rather to increase than diminish the share of power conferred upon them by their office. The boldest assertors of the people's rights, the avowed enemies to prerogative, no sooner get a slice of it, into their own hands, than they take especial care that it shall not dwindle in them—this begets a disposition in ministers to carry matters with a high hand wherever they can, and to bear opposition with impatience and resentment ; by which means measures of the greatest public importance are frequently ringed by the passions of individuals.

These, my friends and countrymen, are my true and genuine sentiments respecting ministers. I have used the word ministers, as a *generical* term, without any application to individuals of any description of party whatever—and sure I am a *professional character* belongs as much to ministers as to sailors, attorneys, churchmen or any *other* description of men easily distinguished by strong characteristical features. They have certainly what the French call *l'esprit du corps* to the full as much among them.—There may perhaps be now and then an exception to the general description I have given of ministers, as we may possibly meet with

with a cowardly failer, an honest attorney, or a bishop who makes piety his only study.

You are now to recollect, my friends, that patriots are formed out of directly the same materials as statesmen; having in the gross identically the same faults, the same passions, though appearing in a different light, from the difference of their situation.

The first maxim with true patriots, alias a party in opposition, be they whom they may, is that it is not possible for their country to suffer a greater evil, than that, of the *existing administration*: the removal of that administration is therefore with them the first step indispensably necessary to the salvation of the state: it is the *sine qua non*, and therefore to be accomplished at any *risk* and by any *means* however intermediately mischievous in their tendency. Their object is certainly power—for they are of *course* under the influence of that love of power which is common to all mankind—but they persuade themselves they do not seek power for its own sake, but meerly from a principle of patriotism. For it would be so much better placed in *their* hands, than in those of the existing administration—the community would derive so many benefits from such a change, that without a total dereliction of the public good, it is impossible they should not wish to see themselves in office.

Such then being their fundamental maxim, they easily reconcile their consciences, to the propriety of opposing, right or wrong, every measure of administration, that is new or out of the ordinary course of business.—There are two obvious reasons for this conduct; the first arises from a conviction of

of the truth of their maxim, that the existing administration is the greatest of all possible evils: they will not therefore accept even of a *benefit* to the country at *their* hands; for weighing a partial good, against the general evil, of the continuance of such men in power, they find the mischief to be apprehended so greatly exceeds the benefit proposed, that, consistent with their regard for the general welfare, they cannot suffer the administration to acquire any credit with the people, even for their good intentions; as that might be a means of confirming them in their situations; and they are ever ready to reject the proffered benefit, on account of the *medium* thro' which it is to come: on the same principle that a man would not chuse to receive a kindness from a house-breaker, for fear of appearing to give a sanction to the gentlemen of that fraternity.

The second reason for their adopting this conduct, is, that they frequently are really and *bona fide* convinced, that what to the rest of the world might appear a very good, or at least a very harmless measure, is in truth a very bad, or a very dangerous one. Men of the strongest minds, seldom escape the effects of living with a number of persons, who being united in one cause, all think one way, all hold one language, and all view one, and only one side of every public question.—It is wonderful with what an increased momentum prejudice works upon the understanding of an individual, when it is a prejudice common to a number; how much from the laws of sympathy party zeal becomes warm, in proportion to the number of persons among whom it circulates. Like fire, the longer the body on which zeal operates, the greater its heat: suppose a hundred faggots set fire to at once, each particular faggot will blaze with ten times more fury, than if it burned alone. What

then with the weight of prejudice, and the warmth of zeal, I am persuaded an opposition party do not oftener attempt to deceive others, than they really deceive themselves.

The being thus liable to deception, and obnoxious to an intemperate warmth, is the natural consequence of any large number of persons thinking and acting in conjunction; but it is an effect not peculiar to political parties, it belongs to all parties, no matter upon what ground they are formed, and is common to all animals who hunt in packs; how much is the furious eagerness of a hound increased, from being joined with a number of his fellow creatures in a *common pursuit*. Nor can we blame a political party if we sometimes see them in the blindness of their zeal, run down a harmless measure of government; when even instinct, the *surest* guide in nature, is not sufficient to prevent the sagacious animals I have mentioned, from making the same mistake; when any number of them get together, they have been known to run full cry upon the trail of a *harmless* red herring, with the same eagerness and fury as if they were pursuing the most mischievous of vermin. Thus the natural consequences of a man's becoming a member of a party,—consequences which he can no more avoid, than a minister can those faults, which his situation irresistibly calls forth;—the consequences, I say are, that he must in a great degree cease to judge for himself; nay, in a little time, he will become incapable of doing so; for he must adopt the political creed of the party, and adhere to it with a religious faith.—The leaders are the Prophets, and he must believe in them too; this is no hard matter for him,—the force of example, and communion with the faithful, soon render him a true disciple; but having abdicated the right of judging

judging for himself, he becomes as incapable of forming a cool dispassionate opinion of political *measures*, without reference to *political men*, as a bigoted priest would be, to decide upon a religious controversy without reference to the Pope.

Thus, my friends, I have communicated to you an old man's sentiments of Ministers and Patriots in general, which are the result of much observation during a long life; and, I believe, you will readily conclude from what I have stated, that to be able to form a just opinion of public measures, a man should be equally detached from government and from party;—viewing these in the light I do, I leave you to judge whether I am qualified to speak impartially upon measures. I have at least one requisite for the task, namely, (what I before mentioned) the having never taken any part on the political stage.—Tho' I am as well entitled from the property I possess in the county in which I reside, to represent it in parliament, as some of my neighbours who have stood candidates, yet I never offered myself for that purpose. My reason was, I did not care to vote half the time I sat in the house against my conscience, for fear of losing my seat at a future election: for being once in, I should not have liked to have been turned out of parliament. And though I could afford perhaps as well as other people to have purchased a seat in a Borough, I was afraid lest the influence of example might induce me to act like other persons, in order to get (to make use of a homely phrase) my *money's worth*,—and in that case, I should not have liked the being a length of time without daring to follow, or even to form any opinion of my own, from the apprehension of losing my prospects. I hope by this time my readers are pretty well acquainted with the disposition, situation and habits

of thinking of the author of these pages,—If I have been too prolix in this introduction of myself, you will make some small allowances for the loquacity which I have heard (tho' I think not altogether justly) attributed to my time of life; if you do not give credit to what I have already told you, I desire to be judged by the manner in which I shall consider the principal subject of this letter.—If I step out of the way to flatter any description of men—if I endeavour to palliate any measure—to gloss over its faults, and make an ostentatious display of its fair side, then deem me unworthy of being listened to;—I would advise you as a father would his children,—but as a father who was *proud* of them,—who had a nice sense of *family dignity*,—who preferred the *honour* of his children to their *interests*, and who would rather see them in the dignified situation of being their own masters, tho' with a bare competency, than for riches of the East behold them sink into *dependence* and affluence.

For the origin of the Commercial Arrangement of which we have all heard so much, and which now fills and alarms the public mind, we are to look to the revolution which took place in this country in the year 1782.—That glorious æra, the bare mention of which, old as I am, makes my blood glow within me.—Then for the first time I felt proud of my country,—proud of my countrymen,—proud of the name of Irishman;—then for the first time I could look an Englishman in the face, and *feel* I was not his inferior,—that æra, when, tho' the gates of commerce had been opened to you before, the keys were for the first time put into your own hands; which made you, my children, (allow me to call you so) your own masters; and that you may continue such, to the end of time, shall be the last wish of my departing breath;

breath; as it will be the last object of my regret, that I had no share in contributing to the event, —but I was old and infirm.

Forgive this involuntary effusion of my heart! Would to God that your conduct since that period, had been as much distinguished for wisdom, as it was marked by the genuine spirit of true patriotism antecedent to it.

That æra, I say it was, which rendered a new system of commerce between Great Britain and this country essentially necessary. I confess after we had asserted the imperial rights of Ireland, from the moment they were acknowledged, it appeared to me incompatible with the dignity of one independent country, to trade upon such unequal terms with another; and before I state my objections to the twenty British commercial resolutions, resolutions which whoever has a drop of Irish blood in his veins, must read with some degree of indignation, I shall intreat your indulgence, to allow me to give you a concise account of the result of my most deliberate investigation of the new situation in which Ireland so fortunately, as I had hoped, and so unexpectedly found herself placed.

I began seriously to consider in what manner my country could improve the advantages she had obtained. The first thing that struck me was that the relative situation of the two kingdoms was without a single exception *totally new*. An *Imperium in Imperio*, two states equally free, each equally independent of the other, but both under one common sovereign, forming coequal branches of the common empire. This was a situation concerning which history was silent, and experience useless;

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no lights were to be derived from the wisdom of former ages, at any period or in any country; we were to look only to the prudence and sagacity of the present day, unassisted by examples, untaught by precepts, and most assuredly *uninspired* on the occasion; for the adoption of that line of conduct which was to insure harmony between the two countries, and prosperity to our own. When I considered these circumstances, rejoiced as I was at what *had* happened, I could not be without apprehensions at what was to *follow*. The moment of public exultation,—when, flushed with success, the national pulse beat high,—when some soreness remained at former ill treatment,—when the benefits obtained were conceived to be rather *extorted*, than *conferred*, and consequently there were little or no feelings of gratitude, to obliterate from the public mind, the sense of past injuries,—this was not a period when it could be expected that the cool, prudent and deliberate conduct should be adopted, which the novelty as well as delicacy of our situation, certainly required; I resolved to look that situation in the face, both in a political, and a commercial point of view; and though I should state unwelcome truths to you, my countrymen, it is my duty to do so, and yours to receive them, as the warnings of a friend—Divest yourselves for a moment, if you can, of giddy pride; lay aside the prejudices you have conceived, (it will be no hard task, for they are young prejudices) I say discard those prejudices respecting your own power and capacity to exist as an unconnected state—A sense of national pride, when it leads us only to assert rights, and repel insults, is as laudable as it is necessary; but where it goes farther, when it induces airy speculations, and a vain pursuit of impracticable schemes, it degenerates into an idle vanity,
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and becomes equally contemptible and mischievous.

The first objects of apprehension that struck me as not improbable consequences of any misconduct in our new situation, were either a *separation* from Great Britain, or what I almost equally dreaded, a UNION. Our political intemperance and abuse of that liberty, the value of which we seemed so little to understand, I apprehended might lead to a *separation*, or that our commercial folly and ignorance of our true interests, might induce England in her own defence, to watch her opportunity to shackle us with a *union*. I had surely some reasons to be alarmed, when I saw that one of these consequences was likely to result from the folly or intemperance of an INTOXICATED PEOPLE—When I viewed our situation in its political point of view, I saw a nation governed by a protestant *faction*—I make use of that expression, because wherever an inferior number of persons govern the bulk of their countrymen *without* their consent, it is a *faction* that governs. These questions then naturally occurred to me—What maintains the government of this country in the hands of one part of the nation, which is so infinitely inferior in number to the other?—What preserves to that part a monopoly in the law, the army, the church, and the state?—What secures to that part their landed property?—What secures to them their religion?—And what their liberty?—What guards their country against the danger of becoming a subordinate province to a foreign power?—Is it the strength of that part of the nation?—No—for the other part greatly out-number them. Is it their superior genius or virtue? No, for they have no pretensions to any superiority of this nature. Is it because their estates have been handed down to
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 them

them from a *long line* of ancestors?—No, No, No! What then is the cause of Ireland's presenting such a political phænomenon, as a country in which a very inferior part of the people are in possession of so many privileges, dignities, rights, and powers, to the exclusion of the rest of the nation?—Go, foolish people, to you, Protestants, I address myself, you have been dreaming long enough of your imaginary power, consequence, and capacity, to exist as an unconnected state—it is time you should awaken to common sense, and answer the questions I have asked, by stating that these exclusive privileges, dignities, rights, and powers, the security of your religion, and your liberty, and even of your landed property, you owe to *your connection with Great Britain*—State this; which if you speak the truth, a truth which there does not breathe a man absurd enough to deny—you *must* state—and then as a proof of your *wisdom*, to say nothing of your *gratitude*, will you lament that your ports are not shut against Great Britain—lament because you have a right to trade with all the world, that you give her a preference over foreign nations—lament that you have agreed to confine yourselves to the produce of her colonies, because you might possibly obtain that produce something cheaper from the colonies of her enemies—No, I trust you will rouse from that delirium of idle vanity—which has too long disgraced you—that you will recollect what you really owe Great Britain—and what you owe to your own character,—or be convinced by your *interest*, if not by your gratitude, that every support and assistance you can give, consistent with the honour of your country, and independence of your parliament, are due to that power on which depends *your own*.

Having

Having taken this view of our political situation in the year 1782, for ever since that period have the idle opinions which I have reprobated been gaining ground, and since that period it is we have heard so much clamour for protecting duties, and so much of all those causes of complaint against Great Britain, I have just enumerated—I next took a view of our commercial situation—I there wanted to discover upon what the pride of our high-minded politicians was founded. I wanted to see how far we could afford to quarrel with Great Britain upon commercial points, and what resources we should find in an intercourse with *foreign* powers, to compensate the losses we might sustain from an interruption of that with Great Britain.

I confess it was with concern I perceived that we were infinitely more in the power of Great Britain, as a *trading* nation, than I had ever before imagined had been the case. I then discovered the wide difference between the *moral liberty* and the *physical capacity* of a nation to increase her trade. The independence of our parliament had restored to us the former in its fullest extent, but it certainly could not add an iota to the latter. Here moral liberty implies nothing more than a *bare right* “to do a thing;” physical capacity implies “the *means* derived from nature of doing that thing.” Yet obvious as this distinction is, whoever has listened to all the nonsense that has been uttered in this country, upon the subject of a free trade, must imagine it had never entered the brain of any one of my countrymen. Now the fact is, no trade can be free where the *physical capacity* does not exactly keep pace with the *moral liberty* of carrying it on; and our misfortune is, that there are few or no instances where this is the case with our

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trade. Two circumstances must ever render trade totally dependent not only upon our own laws, but also upon the will of other states. The first is where we have not of the growth of our own country, both all the raw materials of which a manufacture is composed, but also whatever may be incidentally necessary to the carrying on of the work. The second is, admitting that we have within ourselves all the raw materials, &c. necessary to any particular manufacture, yet even then, the export trade of it must continue totally dependent, unless the united advantages of superior *cheapness* would enable it to force a market for itself without *favour* or *partiality*. Upon these plain and self-evident principles I examined the trade of Ireland in its most material branches, both for export and for home consumption. With this view in the first place I made some enquiries of a sensible well informed linen manufacturer, and stated to him the principles and reasoning I have just laid down.

“ As to linen (said he) we certainly have the
 “ raw materials within our own power, as well
 “ as what may be incidentally necessary to the
 “ carrying on of the manufacture; and yet not-
 “ withstanding, it is a perfectly dependent trade,
 “ for it exists only from favour and partiality—it
 “ wants *cheapness* to force a market for itself.
 “ Great Britain it is true takes annually of Irish
 “ linens to the amount of one million and a half
 “ sterling—but what is it that forces such a pro-
 “ digious consumption in England? It is a duty
 “ of thirty per cent. upon foreign linens, no in-
 “ considerable quantity of which are notwith-
 “ standing sold in England. Now thirty per cent.
 “ upon a million and a half, would amount to
 “ 450,000 l. sterling—so that the truth is, in order
 “ to

“ to *favour* the sale of Irish linens, Great Britain
 “ taxes her home consumption of that article to
 “ the amount of 450,000 l. annually. I say
 “ *taxes* it, for if foreign linens can now keep their
 “ ground in the market notwithstanding a burden
 “ of thirty per cent. it is obvious that if Great
 “ Britain were to take off that burden, foreign
 “ linens could be sold for thirty per cent. less
 “ than they now are—consequently the consumer
 “ would in that case get as much foreign linen for
 “ seventy pounds as he now pays one hundred
 “ pounds for, of Irish—which upon the whole
 “ consumption of the kingdom, now amounting
 “ for Irish linens to one million and a half, would
 “ for foreign linen amount only to one million
 “ fifty thousand pounds, making four hundred
 “ and fifty thousand pounds difference in favour
 “ of the consumers.

“ I am aware (said he) that Great Britain re-
 “ exports part of the linens she imports; but I
 “ have rated this tax upon the whole of the im-
 “ port, to avoid too complicated a calculation,
 “ and because the *increased* sale of foreign linens,
 “ from the duty of thirty per cent. being taken
 “ off them, would make up for any *difference* oc-
 “ casioned by the re-exportation of Irish linens.
 “ But to view this in another light. Suppose
 “ Great Britain should make linens an object of
 “ her revenue; and drained as her resources are,
 “ her invention exhausted in the search of new
 “ objects of taxation, why should she not? Her
 “ own manufactures, the very vitals of her com-
 “ mercial prosperity being no longer held sacred,
 “ if foreign linens hold their place in her market
 “ notwithstanding a burden of thirty per cent.
 “ and the *competition* of linens which pay nothing,

“ *Stop that competition*, and foreign linens would in
 “ time become, at a duty of thirty per cent. a
 “ most productive source of revenue; and the
 “ British treasury might avail itself of the four hun-
 “ dred and fifty thousand a year, which I have al-
 “ ready stated to be in fact a tax paid by the
 “ British consumers of Irish linens, in order to fa-
 “ vour our manufacture. Nothing can be more
 “ obvious, therefore, (continued he) than that our
 “ linen trade is a trade totally dependent upon the
 “ will of another state. We should in vain flatter
 “ ourselves we could find another market equally
 “ good. Where is the state besides Great Britain
 “ that would either tax its own subjects to the
 “ amount of four hundred and fifty thousand
 “ pounds per annum, or deprive its exchequer of
 “ such a sum, in order to favour our linen manu-
 “ facture? Where is the market at which we
 “ could meet those foreign linens, which sell in
 “ Great Britain at the rate of thirty per cent.
 “ cheaper than our own. The truth is, that
 “ England is the *only* country in Europe that
 “ could furnish a market for our fine linens. We
 “ should not be able easily to prevail upon the
 “ different nations of Europe to break through
 “ their old oeconomic customs. The fashion on
 “ the continent, (where I have spent some time)
 “ of wearing coarse linen, is so prevalent, even
 “ among the better sort of people, that a German
 “ baron, a Russian prince, or French count, will
 “ appear at court in linen so coarse, that an
 “ English footman would not think it good enough
 “ for his own wearing—Besides, if there *are* such
 “ markets, why in the name of God, have they
 “ never yet been discovered? We were at all
 “ times free to export our linen, and yet even at
 “ this day, the whole of the linen we send to the
 “ rest of the world, amounts to little more than
 “ a twen-

“ a twentieth part of the quantity we send to
 “ England alone, and even a considerable por-
 “ tion of that part, goes to the *British colonies*.”

I was by no means flattered by this account of the great staple of our trade; but to my great mortification I learned from this person another *trifling* circumstance, which was nothing more than that the principal part of this trade was carried on upon **BRITISH CAPITAL**.

Let me ask you then, my countrymen, what is the state of that great staple manufacture upon which hangs your existence as a people—Which keeps want and beggary from your doors—which employs and maintains so large a portion of the inhabitants of your country, and which brings annually into it one million and a half sterling? Is your linen trade a free and independent trade, which forcing its own way, from the superior quality and cheapness of the commodity, can secure to itself a market and is under no control but your own?—No—it is dependent upon the good will of another country for its capital—and upon the bounty of another country for its market—A country which in order to secure to your manufacture a sale in her market, taxes her own inhabitants to the amount of the difference between the price of Irish linens, sold in it, and that at which the same quantity of foreign linens might be purchased, were the duty England imposes upon them taken off—a country which holds your manufacture sacred, at a time her own manufactures are sinking under the burthen of a much regretted but unavoidable taxation—and a country in whose power it lies, at a moment's warning, to dash to the ground this main pillar of Irish commerce and of Irish prosperity.

Will

Will you accuse me, my countrymen, of pusillanimity, when after having considered these circumstances I judged it would not be prudent in us, lightly to quarrel with Great Britain upon commercial points.

I next took a view of our leathern manufacture and provision trade.—Here I was in hopes we were pretty safe—here at last thought I, we have two branches of trade entirely dependent upon ourselves, for no country can furnish the articles of these trades so good and in such plenty as we can. But my satisfaction did not last long, for the tanner told me he imported all his bark from *England*.—What, exclaimed I, does an Englishman keep the key of your tan-yard? can a rival (for England too deals in leathern manufactures) shut the door of it whenever he pleases, and lock the owner out? The tanner laughed, but said, there was no danger of that, for England allowed the export of bark duty free.—I shrugged my shoulders.—Long may they continue to do so, thought I.—But I felt that it was not pleasant it should be even in her power either to shut the door of the tan-yard or to tax our leather, by prohibiting or imposing a duty upon the exportation of her bark.

My last hope was our provision trade. I knew our beef was that of our own bullocks, reared in our own fields, and consequently fed with our own grafs: well, thought I, we may export beef in spite of the d—l; but a Cork merchant acquainted me, we had no salt of our own with which to cure it. Where do you get it then? We get, answered he, all our rock salt from England. So then England can tax your provision trade when, and to what amount, she thinks proper, by laying a duty upon the export of her rock salt.—O, she'll not

do

do that, answered the merchant carelessly. I wish we were *sure* she never would, thought I.

Receiving no great comfort from my enquiry relative to our export trade, I next took a view of our home trade, and of some of the principal articles of domestic use.

Having been always a great enemy to the consumption of whiskey among our common people, and as great an advocate for the introduction of malt liquor in its room, which I have ever promoted as much as possible among my own tenants and labourers—Beer became naturally the first object of my enquiry; and here, alas! I found that England had the *key* of the warehouse where our best malt and all our hops were kept.—Would to heaven, thought I, that we had as good malt of our own, and could grow hops as well as England, or that our import of the raw materials without which beer cannot be made, were not subject to the caprice of another country, and in this instance, a *rival* country. I then saw that my favourite scheme of bringing beer into common use, was totally at the mercy of England, who could render the price of malt and hops as dear as she pleased.

As I was meditating upon this, I passed by a tin-shop. Tin-ware, said I, is an article of very general use, and absolutely necessary in some cases, perhaps we have block-tin of our own—I asked the man in the shop where he got his block-tin,—“I import it from England, Sir, answered he.” England again! exclaimed I, and went away very peevishly; the man wondering what I meant. Walking on at random, reflecting on the wretched and naturally dependent state of our trade, I found

found myself facing a glass-house; I stepped in, and was pleased to see the glass manufacture of this country brought to such perfection.—I congratulated the owner upon it.—“Ah, Sir,” said he, “it is a very precarious business, I do not chuse to risk much capital in it.”——Why so? “The English manufacturers of glass would do all they could to destroy us, and it is in the power of England to do it at any time.”——How pray? “Why in the first place, some of the materials for making glass we are obliged to import from England; but if you were to know the quantity of coals we consume, you would perceive that an English duty upon that article alone (and God knows when they may take it in their heads to lay one on) would utterly ruin us, for the English glass manufacture would undersell us in that case, and we must break or quit the trade.”

I was ten times more vexed than ever at this information. I had never considered coals as an article of trade or manufacture before; I now saw their vast importance, not only on account of the variety of manufactures, in which it is indispensably requisite they should be made use of; but also from their being a necessary of life, to raise the price of which, would be in fact to raise the price of labour, for it is obvious, a necessary of life must be had at all events, and where it exceeds the present means of the labourer, workman or manufacturer, as we cannot bring down the price of the necessary of life to the standard of their wages, we must evidently raise their wages in proportion to the advance upon the necessary of life; a tax of this nature, therefore, is in reality a tax upon the *primum* of all manufacturers; and such a tax would that upon coals prove.

After

After this view of our home and export trade, had I not reason, my friends, to feel mortified when I perceived, how much as a trading nation, we were in the power of Great Britain.

When I perceived, that if we were disposed to commence commercial hostilities against her, she might in the *First* place—ruin our staple manufacture, or in other words, deprive us of the annual receipt of one million five hundred thousand pounds sterling. How well a country, whose *poverty* is the ostensible reason and apology for her discontent, could afford this, I shall leave you to judge.

Secondly, She could destroy for a time at least, and possibly for ever, another branch of our export trade, our leather manufacture, by refusing us her *bark*.

Thirdly, She could give a blow to our provision trade, from which it might not easily recover, by refusing us her *rock salt*.

Fourthly, She might annihilate our Breweries, by imposing any new duties or a prohibition upon the export of her *malt* and *hops*, these being staple commodities almost peculiar to England.

Fifthly, She could stop the hands of our workers in tin, whenever she thought proper.

Sixthly, She could utterly destroy our glass manufactories, by imposing an export duty upon coals, in doing which she would only place the inhabitants of Dublin, on the same footing with those of London, respecting an article of her *own produce*.

And *Seventhly*, This last tax would not only ruin all our infant manufactures, in the process of which coals must unavoidably be used, but would also prove, where coals are a necessary of life, a tax upon labour, and consequently a tax upon the *Primum* of all our manufactures whatever.

I own, my countrymen, it is a *consolatory* circumstance that Great Britain could do, what I have here stated it to be in her power to do, without its being considered by any possible misconstruction, either expressly or by implication, as an infringement upon *our* legislative independence; it would only be an exercise of her *own* undoubted legislative authority, which would leave us in complete possession of our *own* free constitution, and of the *whole* of our *own* free trade.

I am aware, my friends, we are at this day an independent people; possessed of as free a constitution as Englishmen enjoy, and of a right to trade with every nation upon earth which chuses to trade with us. Should therefore Great Britain adopt to our prejudice that line of conduct I have mentioned, in consequence of our commencing commercial hostilities against her, my pride will not suffer me to suppose, we might not look to *ourselves* and to *foreign countries* for those advantages we should no longer derive from Great Britain. And I have not the smallest doubt that by the time we had reconciled ourselves to the loss of the annual receipt of one million and a half, for our linens; that we had diverted that trade into a new channel, and had begun to scrape a few thousands together by it;—by the time the oaks we should immediately

diately plant, were sufficiently grown, to provide us with bark of our own;—by the time we had established a correspondence with some foreign country, in order to provide ourselves with rock salt, brought from a greater distance, and at a dearer rate, than that we now get from England;—by the time we had prevailed on some foreign state, whose soil and climate were adapted to the purpose, to turn malsters and to grow hops, in order to supply us with those articles;—by the time we should have discovered tin-mines of our own, or that in a violent storm, an angle of the county of Cornwall should be blown upon our coasts;—by the time we shall have sufficiently worked our collieries, to have coals of our own, in as great plenty and as cheap as we get them from England;—I say I have not the smallest doubt we shall be able (provided we have any inhabitants left) to set up business again, and possibly become thriving traders. But the difficulty with me is, what we are to do in the interim: Let any man explain that to my satisfaction, and I am ready to commence commercial hostilities against Great Britain whenever he pleases.

I am also aware, that should Great Britain presume to shut her market against us, and refuse us her raw materials, only because this poor country wanted to keep all her own trade to herself,—that we could retaliate by shutting her entirely out of our markets, and refusing our raw materials.

We could say to her, if you will not take *our* *linens* we will not take *your* *woollens*.

By

By the last accounts I have
by me (those of the year
1782) I find England
took of Irish linens to
the amount of

£. 1,646,138 0 0

And that we took of
British woollens to the
value of

322,393 0 0

1,323,745 0 0

So that in this part of the contest, we
should lose only the trifling sum of one million
three hundred and twenty-three thousand seven
hundred and forty-five pounds sterling.

We could say to her, if you refuse us your raw
materials, we will refuse ours to you. In this con-
test there would be this small inequality on our
side, viz. that Great Britain can do *without* our raw
materials, and we, for the present at least, can *not*
do without *hers*, and the reason is, that Great
Britain takes our raw materials only to *extend* her
manufactures. She has within herself the same sort
of raw materials, only not in sufficient quantity,
altho' it is in her power to increase that quantity
whenever she thinks proper. The raw materials
Ireland takes from Great Britain are on the con-
trary essential to the very existence of the Irish
manufactures, as she neither has, nor *can* have
within herself raw materials of the same sort.

However

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However let us see how the account would stand :

In the same year Great Britain imported from us raw materials to the amount of £. 296,340 0 0

Provision and other articles	757,346 0 0
	1,053,686 0 0

The amount of raw materials, and other articles we took from Great Britain, was, as nearly as I can collect, about

413,924 0 0
639,762 0 0

Here then we should lose only another small sum of six hundred and thirty-nine thousand seven hundred and sixty-two pounds; together with the trifling consideration of the absolute ruin which our not obtaining from Great Britain coals and the raw materials we had been accustomed to get from her, would bring upon one half of our best and most flourishing manufactures, besides miserably crippling all the rest.

Lastly, we might say to Great Britain, we will not only refuse all your own products, but we will no longer take from you any foreign or colonial products,—these may amount to about 750,000 l.—

I have

I have already shewn that the balance against us in this contest, would in the articles of linens and woollens amount to

£. 1,323,745 0 0

In raw materials and other articles

639,762 0 0

1,963,507 0 0

Deduct what Great Britain would lose by our no longer taking her foreign and colonial produce

750,000 0 0

There would still remain against us

1,213,507 0 0

For in the year 1782, the whole of our exports to

Great Britain amounted to £. 2,699,825 0 0

Our imports from do.

1,486,318 0 0

£. 1,213,507 0 0

Consequently a balance of one million two hundred and thirteen thousand five hundred and seven pounds in *our favour*, which would fall a sacrifice to the first interruption of the commercial intercourse between Great Britain and Ireland,—together with the ruin of some of our principal manufactures. But in return for these *small* losses, we should have displayed a proper sense of our own dignity; a proper spirit of retaliation (in which one independent country should never be behind-hand with another), and we should have the satisfaction

faction of purchasing all the colonial produce we should consume (supposing we had any money to pay for it) of those foreign powers with whose colonies we should never be permitted to trade.

These are the mighty advantages, my countrymen, which would result from a commercial war with Great Britain—"And yet Ireland is beyond all doubt an independent kingdom, possessed of a *right* to trade with every nation upon earth that chuses to trade with her."—But do these high-sounding words make any alteration in the truth of the facts I have stated? No, they only serve to deceive you—and to make you talk nonsense in a lofty style. Those words indeed state very accurately what *is* the situation of your country: But let me inform you what it *ought* to be, to authorize you to hold the proud commercial language, which now only serves to expose both your arrogance and your folly. "It ought to be that of an independent kingdom, possessed not only of a *right* to trade, but also possessed *within herself* independently of any other country, of the MEANS of trading with every nation upon earth, that chuses to trade with her." What is a *right* to trade, without the *means* of trading? What is your *Free Trade*, the sound of which fills you with idle vanity only, because you do not understand its meaning? I will tell you—It is a *naked right*, and a barren right it will prove, unless you have within your *own* power the means of exercising it; or unless you have sense enough to preserve a friendly intercourse with a country, which can furnish you with those means, of which Nature has deprived your own soil and climate.

I own

- I own I never considered this famous free trade of ours, received with so much joy, and productive of so much disappointment, that it did not remind me of the old story of the lady, who insisted that in her marriage settlements, there should be an obligation on her husband to keep her a coach—He consented—but after marriage, the lady found to her sorrow, she had forgot to have *horses* mentioned. We too stipulated for *our coach*, a coach we got, and a coach of our own was a fine thing—Some stared at it; all talked of it; every body admired it; what shall we do with it? cries one.—“Arragh, says Paddy, never mind talking about doing any thing with it at all; we have other business to mind”—“What’s that?”—“Why, to keep our roads clear, to be sure, that nobody’s coach should run upon them but our own.” Well, it was agreed to keep the roads clear; but Paddy in the interim wanted to take a drive—“Arragh, where the D—l are the horses?” cried he. “Why, says a plain-spoken man, don’t you know, you have got none of your own? If you want to take a drive, you must borrow them of that gentleman, whose coach you threatened to turn out of the road the other day.” It was exactly thus with our free trade.—The moving powers which set the wheels of commerce in motion, are, First, A *certain* market where we can purchase our materials, if not produced in our own country. Second, A *certain* market where we can dispose of our manufactures. Those moving powers certainly are not in our own possession;—we must borrow them from England.

I have thus, my friends, given you a faithful account of the result of my most deliberate investigation, of the new situation in which Ireland found herself placed soon after the year 1782; whether I considered

I considered it in a political or a commercial point of view, it certainly afforded no pleasing prospects for the future—The madness of our politics, the intemperate use, or rather abuse of our liberty, made me at one time dread a separation—our commercial folly, and injustice, in wishing to deprive Great Britain of all benefits from her trade with Ireland, made me equally apprehensive, that a Union, or a War might be the consequence. I confess I hardly knew which I should prefer, if necessity drove me to so sad a choice. I however did not pass my time in a supine contemplation of the difficulties of our situation—How to extricate ourselves from it was the constant object of my thoughts—Retired as I live, without a single pursuit on this side of the grave, I had sufficient leisure for reflection; and from not living much among my countrymen, I flatter myself I have sufficiently escaped the contagion of their opinions, to be able to give an unbiassed one of my own.

How we might reap all the advantages of a union without entailing upon ourselves and posterity its mischiefs—How we might preserve in its utmost purity the independence of our legislature, and at the same time act in concert with Great Britain, where the common interests of the empire rendered such concert necessary; These have been, for some time past, the constant subjects of my thoughts; as to succeed in my researches upon a point, on which hung the fate of my country, was the *ultimatum* of my wishes. I have an old-fashioned way of reasoning, not much in use now-a-days—I love to recur to first principles, I like to lay down certain self-evident truths; these form the *terra firma* of argument. I shall therefore lay down the following positions with respect to the political connection

connection between the two countries, before I state any thing respecting their *commercial* connection; for the one forms the basis of the other.

1st. That it is essential to the happiness, the peace, the strength, and the prosperity of the two countries, circumstanced as they are relatively to each other, and circumstanced as they are relatively to the rest of Europe, that Great Britain and Ireland should with respect to foreign powers form but *one state* under one *common sovereign*.

2dly. That in order to preserve this *unity of state*, with respect to foreign powers, it is as essential to the interests of Great Britain, as to the interests and honour of Ireland, that the parliament of either country should hold the supreme legislative rights of the other *sacred*—any attempt to do otherwise being, as Ireland is now circumstanced, the most effectual means of destroying every advantage the two kingdoms could reap from being united under one common sovereign.

3dly. That in consequence of this *unity of state* with respect to foreign powers, and of the two countries having but one common sovereign, it necessarily follows, that in all transactions with foreign powers, in treaties and in alliances, in peace or in war, they are to all intents and purposes one and the same state, and consequently can have but one common army, and one common fleet, of which their common sovereign is generalissimo.

4thly. That as the two kingdoms with respect to foreign powers, are to all intents and purposes one and the same state, so their power, consequence and weight in the scale of Europe, and over the face of the globe, must depend upon their mutually

ally giving each other every possible assistance, advantage, and support; and that each should render such assistance, advantage and support, as *secure* to the other, as the nature of things will permit—each giving to the other, in all points, the most decided preference over every foreign country whatsoever.

These, my friends, I conceive to be the four fundamental political principles of the present connection between Great Britain and Ireland: I have said the nature of their *political* connection forms the basis of the *commercial* connection which *ought* to subsist between them. I must therefore intreat you, while I state what ought to be the principles of that commercial connection, to keep in view the positions I have just laid down.

1st. The two countries considered with respect to foreign powers, being one and the same state, have in that point of view, one *common* interest; but considered with respect to each other, each having a distinct legislature, and being in many particulars very differently circumstanced; when viewed in that light, each has a *local* interest, distinct from their common interest. It is however essential to the prosperity of the two kingdoms, that the *local interest* of *either* should never be pursued to the *injury* of the *common* interests of *both*.

2dly. From this principle it follows, that each country should not only confer upon the other every commercial benefit in her power, but also, that each should give the other a decided preference over every foreign state, although a commercial intercourse with such foreign state might
be

be more advantageous to the *local* interests of either.

3dly. It is essential to the separate interests of each country, considered as distinct kingdoms, that where the *local* interest of either, does not interfere with the *common* interests of both, each country should be at full liberty to pursue that *local interest*.

4thly. It is essential to the commercial harmony which ought to subsist between Great Britain and Ireland, that where one country confers a trade upon the other, for the common interests of both, neither should consult only her *local* interest, by endeavouring to obtain an unfair advantage over the other. They should therefore both enjoy such trade, so granted upon identically the same terms, and under the same regulations.

These are the eight fundamental principles, in part political, and in part commercial, upon which alone, a just, an honourable, and a lasting settlement with Great Britain can be formed. Raise your superstructure upon them, and they will prove eight massive pillars, supporting the temple of British and Irish concord, at whose altar the two nations may join hands, sacrifice their mutual jealousies, and pledge their faith, to mutual support, and perpetual friendship.

Being after the most mature consideration, of which I was capable, perfectly convinced of the truth and soundness of the principles I had laid down, I proceeded to examine how far our actual situation coincides with, and how far it varies from these principles.—Great Britain and Ireland, with respect to foreign powers, form but *one* state under

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one common sovereign : this agrees with my first political position. ↙

The parliament of Ireland has completely recovered its independence, and all claim to legislate for this country, has been most solemnly surrendered on the part of Great Britain. This agrees with my second political position.

I perceived that our situation very nearly corresponded with my third political position. The two kingdoms with relation to foreign powers are, in a general point of view, considered as one and the same state :—Having one army, one fleet, under one sovereign, for the protection of both—but I saw there was wanting, on the part of Ireland, a specific claim, and positive right, in time of peace, to call upon that fleet to protect her trade from insult ; and I wished to establish for Ireland such a claim, as a compliance with which *could* not be refused by Great Britain, without a *Breach of National Faith*. * But when I came to examine our situation with

* I have heard a great deal about an Irish fleet, and an Irish naval *flag*, in contradistinction to her commercial flag. But I confess I never thoroughly understood what this meant. We have an *Irish* army, that is we *pay* for one ; but who commands it ? The common sovereign of both countries :—it is consequently *part* of the common army of both kingdoms. Does Ireland deem that part of the army she pays, so peculiarly her *OWN*, as to be any increase of her separate strength and power, when compared to the strength and power of Great Britain ? By no means—she certainly views her part of the common army in the directly contrary light. In the same manner she might have a *fleet* of her own, that is, she might *pay* for one—but as long as the common sovereign of both countries commands it, it is just as absurd to talk of Ireland's having a distinct *fleet*, separate from that of Great Britain, as it would be to talk of her having an army distinct from that of Great Britain. The idea therefore either implies a disposition to separate from Great Britain,

with respect to my fourth political position, a part of which is, "that each country should give to the other, every possible assistance, advantage and support; and that each should render such assistance, advantage and support, as *secure* to the other, as the nature of things will permit"—I found that this was much better performed on the part of Ireland, than on that of Great Britain, who denied us many advantages she had it in her power to give us, and we had some right to claim—When I recollected how much more *our* trade was in the power of Great Britain, than *her* trade was in ours—When I recollected from the facts I have formerly stated, that any apprehension in Great Britain of retaliation on our part, where we

Britain, or it is an absurdity. To separate from Great Britain, is, in other words, to renounce our allegiance to the House of Hanover. For circumstanced as the two countries now are, a separation from Great Britain, means a disunion of their respective crowns, or it means nothing. We may vote money indeed for the purpose of building ships, but when built, who commands them? *The King of Great Britain*. Who appoints the officers? *The King of Great Britain*. To whom do the sailors take an oath of fidelity and obedience? *To the King of Great Britain*; who most assuredly must consider such ships as part of the common fleet of both kingdoms, in the same manner as he does the army paid by Ireland, as part of the army of the empire. It is nonsense to say, it is the King of Ireland who commands our army; and it is the King of Ireland who *would* command our fleet: supposing the *two Countries* should disagree, I am afraid the *two Kings* would be but of *one* opinion, and would join their armies and their fleets in *one* cause. If Ireland must have a separate fleet of her own, I apprehend there are but two ways of accomplishing her purpose—The first, is, to chuse a *separate King* of her own, a measure I do not think very advisable. The second is, to appoint a Lord High Admiral, to be independent of his present Majesty and his successors, who shall have the sole command of the Irish fleet—who shall swear allegiance only to the Lords and Commons of Ireland, and be accountable to them alone for his conduct. And this, I apprehend, would be a slight innovation of the constitution.

we must play so losing a game, was not of itself sufficient to insure to us those advantages she now gives us, I perceived that some more effectual *security* was wanting to us, for the continuance of such advantages.

When I next considered our situation with respect to my first commercial position, a part of which states "that the *local* interest of either country "should never be pursued to the injury of the "common interests of both," I perceived, that though Ireland observed this doctrine, Great Britain in many particulars did not—I perceived a misconstruction of the *Navigation Act*; I perceived a prohibition in Great Britain upon many articles of our manufacture, though our ports were open to all hers.

The same observation is in a great degree applicable to my second commercial position: As Ireland gives a decided preference not only to the produce of Great Britain, but also of her colonies, over that of every other foreign state, although the same commodities might possibly be had cheaper from other countries, but as long as Great Britain refuses to take colonial produce from Ireland, she makes no difference in that respect between us and a foreign state.

With respect to my third commercial position, stating "that each country should be at full liberty to pursue her *local* interests, when it did "not tend to the injury of the common interests "of both;" with this our situation at present perfectly corresponds. For our foreign export is totally free, and our foreign import trade is under no restraints, but such as necessarily arise out of the principle that each country is to give to the
other

other a decided preference over every foreign power, in all cases of similar commodities.

In the last place I observed, that the fourth commercial position I have laid down, the purport of which is, that when a trade is conferred by one country upon the other, that upon which it is conferred cannot in justice or common sense, expect to enjoy it otherwise than upon indentically the same terms, and under the same regulations as those upon which the country making the grant enjoys it herself.

I observed, I say, that Ireland already strictly conforms to this maxim, as appears from the 19th and 20th Geo. III. chap. 11. which states that the trade to the British colonies, plantations, and settlements on the coast of Africa “ can be enjoyed “ and have continuance so long and in such case “ only as the goods to be imported from the said “ colonies, plantations, or settlements, into this “ kingdom, or to be exported from this kingdom, “ to the said colonies, plantations or settlements, “ shall be liable to *equal* duties and drawbacks, “ and be subject to the *same securities, regulations,* “ and *restrictions*, as the like goods are liable and “ subject to upon their being imported from the “ said colonies, plantations, and settlements, into “ Great Britain, or exported from thence into “ such colonies, &c.” And it then proceeds to enact all the duties, regulations, and restrictions in exact conformity to those of Great Britain.

Having thus viewed our actual situation, with an immediate reference to the eight fundamental principles I have laid down, as well as having duly considered the naturally dependent state of our trade, of which I have already given a very faithful

ful representation, it appeared evident to me, that nothing more was necessary to be done than to render the relative situation of Great Britain and Ireland, strictly conformable to these eight fundamental principles; and that either country which should at present by her regulations deviate from them in the smallest degree, should immediately adopt such measures as should tend to establish between them a permanent settlement, perfectly co-inciding with those principles.

Having thus prepared, and if I may so express myself, armed my mind against any commercial arrangement which should be in the smallest degree hostile to the interest of this country; having formed to myself a fixed standard, a certain criterion by which I could instantly ascertain the merit or demerit of any part of the settlement in agitation, I waited with the utmost impatience and anxiety for the arrival of the commercial resolutions from Great Britain, being fully determined to sound the alarm to my countrymen, should those propositions, in any instance, not prove perfectly consonant to the political and commercial principles, upon which alone, in my opinion, can be formed a safe, an honourable, and permanent settlement between the two kingdoms.

I had endeavoured to keep my mind perfectly unbiassed during their progress through the British Parliament. At this distance from the capital I seldom see newspapers; (which at the best are a very idle sort of reading) and I paid very little attention to the vague reports, that, even retired as I live, sometimes reached my ears. The British propositions at length arrived—and I began with the utmost good humour, coolness and attention to read and examine them—having previously laid

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upon

upon the table beside me, fairly written out, my eight fundamental principles as the standard to which I should refer every individual proposition, and with which it must be perfectly consonant, before I could possibly admit it as a part of the intended settlement.

The first resolution gave me great pleasure, and I conceived the fairest hopes from so good a beginning.

I could not but approve of the first part of the second resolution, though I had some objection to the words *permanent* and *secure*, in the condition upon which a participation of commercial advantages was to be secured to us: but of this I shall speak presently.

The third resolution met with my warmest approbation, as it entirely does away the misconstruction of the navigation act, and consequently removes one of the instances in which the conduct of Great Britain was a complete departure from one of those commercial principles, a consonance to which I deemed essentially necessary in any settlement between the two kingdoms.

But my satisfaction was not of any long duration—for I next came to the fourth resolution.—I had hardly patience to read it through—the instant I ran my eyes over it, all the feelings of resentment, indignation, and disappointment instantly took possession of my mind. What! the *whole trade* of Ireland to be subject to *British laws*! British laws to be again *in force* in Ireland! If the Dæmon of Discord, I exclaimed in a rage—had guided his pen who wrote this resolution, he could not have adopted words better calculated to

to excite a flame in Ireland—It appeared to me a direct attack upon my second fundamental principle of any connection between the two countries—it appeared to me to blast all my hopes; and converted the short-lived satisfaction I received from reading the three first resolutions, into anger and despair—I threw the whole of the propositions aside, determined never to look at them again.

I honestly own to you, my friends, that these were my first emotions upon reading the fourth resolution of the British parliament.—But I could not so readily give up all hopes of obtaining, what had been so long the constant subject of my thoughts, and constant object of my wishes.—In the course of a few days I resolved to read that resolution again. The first warmth of my resentment being past, I began to reflect, that it was hardly within the scope of absurdity itself, to adopt the conduct, which my interpretation of the fourth resolution must necessarily attribute to the British administration—I recollected that after what has passed within this country in the course of the last six years—that after the experience of the American contest, it was scarcely within the reach either of pride or folly, to think of dividing the remaining branches of the empire—it was not I thought within the reach of a pride, which had been sufficiently humbled—or of a folly which had been somewhat instructed by adversity. I recollected that after the loss of America, Great Britain was to look to Ireland—and to Ireland *alone* for the recovery of her consequence among the nations of Europe.

It is not possible, thought I, however the fourth proposition may be *worded*, that it can *mean*, what would amount to a breach of national honour, of

national faith and of common honesty—what would amount to an impotent attempt of blind ignorance, calculated only to provoke resentment, but unable to enforce obedience—Under this impression, I read the fourth proposition a second time—I read it calmly to discover its meaning, for the wording of it had already produced its effect upon my mind—I then perceived that the mischief lay rather in the wording, than in the meaning of that resolution. Absurdly and ungraciously worded it certainly is—“*The laws for regulating trade and navigation*”—Here *trade* being used in its general and most comprehensive sense, might very aptly lead us to imagine the whole trade of Ireland was included, our home and foreign trade, as well as the British colonial trade. And next the words, “*That all laws which have been made or shall be made in Great Britain, &c.*—SHOULD BE IN FORCE IN IRELAND—In force in Ireland! the very words of the 6th of G. I.—words, which must ever sound so harsh in the ears of Irishmen. These from a natural association of ideas might as aptly lead us to imagine, that Great Britain meant to break faith with Ireland, and resume a power she had so solemnly renounced for ever. I was not therefore surprized at the indignation which the first view of a proposition so worded excited in my mind—but upon further consideration, I perceived, that, though the term *trade* was used in its general sense in the first part of the resolution, it was afterwards in a subsequent part of the same resolution, so limited and restrained, as evidently to mean only the trade of the *British colonies and plantations*—That trade which we had already accepted of, on the condition of carrying it on, under the same restrictions and regulations as those required of us by the present proposition: with this

this only difference, that in the grant made to Ireland, in the year 1780, of the trade to the British colonies and plantations, it was stipulated, that Ireland if she disliked the restriction or regulation, might refuse to accede to it, upon giving up all right to export or import the article affected by such restriction or regulation. — Here, therefore, was no *security* given to Great Britain by Ireland, for the permanency of a settlement, calculated to favour the produce of the British colonies and plantations. — And why? because Great Britain had given no *security* to Ireland that her linens should be *for ever* imported by her *duty free*—should be *for ever effectually favoured*. Because Great Britain had given no *security* to Ireland that those raw materials, which are essential to some of her most important manufactures, should be *for ever exported duty free*.—In the present case reciprocal securities are given, and both are to stand or fall together.—I confess also, I do not see any very essential difference, as to the *effect*, between *forfeiting* a trade, because we *reject* a law—and *rejecting* a trade because we *dislike* a law—and the latter is certainly still in our power—in both cases the trade is equally given up—with this difference only, in the one we reject a *law*, and the *trade* becomes a *nullity*—in the other, we reject the *trade*, and the *law* becomes a *nullity*—It is a meer dead letter, because without an object.

When I became perfectly satisfied, that the fourth resolution applied to the trade of the British colonies and plantations, and to *that trade alone*, I referred to my first, second, and fourth fundamental commercial principles, of a settlement between the two countries,—which, to refresh the reader's memory, I shall here repeat.

The first and second are,

1st. "The two countries considered with respect
"to foreign powers, being one and the same state,
"have in that point of view, one *common* interest.
"But considered with respect to each other, each
"having a distinct legislature, and being in many
"particulars very differently circumstanced, when
"viewed in that light each has a *local* interest,
"distinct from their common interest.—It is how-
"ever essential to the prosperity of the two king-
"doms, that the *local interest of either should never be*
"*pursued to the injury of the common interests of both.*"

2d. "From this principle it follows, that each
"country, should not only confer upon the other,
"every commercial benefit in her power, but also
"that each should give the other a decided prefer-
"ence over every foreign state, altho' a commercial
"intercourse with such foreign state, might be more
"advantageous to the *local* interests of either."

From these principles it follows, that we ought
to give a decided preference to the British colonies
and plantations, over the colonies of any other
power.—For as both kingdoms are equally interest-
ed in the maritime strength of the empire,—it is
the *common* interest of both to promote that strength
by every means in their power; and as the trade
to the British colonies and plantations contributes
so much to that maritime strength, it becomes the
common interest of both countries to contribute also
to that trade: Ireland could not therefore pursue
her *local* interest in purchasing the commodities of
foreign countries, on account of their being pos-
sibly cheaper than those she gets from the British,
without injuring the *common* interests of both coun-
tries; which would be a direct departure from the

two principles I have stated,—principles, I will venture to assert, equally founded in justice and policy.

My fourth commercial proposition which I shall also repeat is :

4th. “ It is essential to the commercial harmony which ought to subsist between Great Britain and Ireland, that where one country confers a trade upon the other for the common interests of both, neither should consult only her *local* interest, by endeavouring to obtain an unfair advantage over the other.” They should therefore both enjoy such trade so granted upon identically the same terms, and under the same regulations.

With respect to this principle, I shall beg leave to state a few observations which have occurred to my mind, on the nature of legislative independency, and how far, either in the present settlement, or in that of 1780, the independency of the Irish legislature can be said to be invaded by agreeing to adopt, or register, (call it which you will) all the laws which have been made, or shall be made in Great Britain, for regulating and restraining the trade of the British colonies and plantations. To consider this in merely an equitable point of view, certainly nothing can be more fair than for Great Britain to say to Ireland :—

“ We who are exclusively possessed of the trade to our own colonies and plantations; a trade which is as much our *property* as the soil on which we live; agree to take you into partnership in that trade, provided you do not expect to enjoy it upon better terms than we do ourselves;—your exports to, and imports from our colonies and
“ plantations

“ plantations shall be laid under no other re-
 “ strictions and regulations than our own,—but
 “ we expect they should be under the *same*.—You
 “ cannot expect that your exports to our planta-
 “ tions should pay a *smaller* duty than ours do;
 “ for, in that case you would be enabled to drive
 “ us out of our own plantation market; neither
 “ can you expect that your imports from thence
 “ of any raw materials to be afterwards manu-
 “ factured by you, should pay a less duty than
 “ ours do upon the same materials; for in that
 “ case, you would not only be enabled to drive
 “ us out of every foreign market where there
 “ was a sale for those materials so manufactured,
 “ but also, even out of our own home-market in
 “ Great Britain. We desire no advantage over you
 “ which regulations or restrictions could give us; we
 “ only desire that you should have no advantages
 “ of that sort over us;—we therefore expect you
 “ will impose the same restrictions and regulations
 “ upon the share we *grant* to you, of our planta-
 “ tion trade, that we impose upon that part of it
 “ which remains in our own hands.—And this is the
 “ condition upon which we make you the *grant*.”

I say to view this in a merely equitable point of
 view, nothing in nature can be more fair.—Let
 us next consider it in a constitutional point of view;
 and here I shall lay down some positions which I
 defy any man breathing, of common sense, to
 contradict.

The power of any legislature, however inde-
 pendent, can only *operate within* the *limits* of its
 jurisdiction,—it can take no cognizance of any ob-
 ject *beyond* those limits,—for they are not *within*
 the *sphere* of its *authority*;—an attack therefore up-
 on the *independency* of a legislature, must *interfere*
 with

with some objects *within* the *limits* of its jurisdiction.—There cannot possibly be any attack upon that independency, with respect to any object NOT WITHIN those limits; for where there is *no authority*, it is impossible *authority* should be *wounded*. I ask then whether, by any possible construction, the *British* trade to her *own* colonies and plantations, can be considered to be *within* the limits of the jurisdiction of the *Irish* legislature?—Is that trade *within* the sphere of its authority?—Do the regulations therefore of *that* trade *interfere* with an object naturally and properly within the *sphere* of its authority?

How then can the authority of a legislature be wounded, respecting an object over which it had *no* authority? When therefore Great Britain gives to Ireland a share in the British trade to the British Colonies and Plantations, she gives her an *interest* in that trade for her *advantage*, but she does not mean to furnish a *new* object to the Irish legislature for the *exercise* of its authority: This trade forms no part (If I may so express myself) of the *inheritance* of the *Irish* legislature—no part of its *Commercial Dominion*: If Great Britain therefore places this trade, which could never have been considered *within* the limits of the jurisdiction of the Irish legislature—I say if she places it in some degree within the *sphere* of the authority of that legislature, surely she may do so, to *what* degree, and under *what* restrictions she pleases. Is not that trade part of her own *Legislative Inheritance*, part of her own *Commercial Dominion*; and when she intrusts her *Inheritance* and her *Dominion* into *other* hands, is she to have no security against the *abuse* of the trust.

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 “ strictions and regulations than our own,—but
 “ we expect they should be under the *same*.—You
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 “ of any raw materials to be afterwards manu-
 “ factured by you, should pay a less duty than
 “ ours do upon the same materials; for in that
 “ case, you would not only be enabled to drive
 “ us out of every foreign market where there
 “ was a sale for those materials so manufactured,
 “ but also, even out of our own home-market in
 “ Great Britain. We desire no advantage over you
 “ which regulations or restrictions could give us; we
 “ only desire that you should have no advantages
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I shall beg leave to illustrate this doctrine concerning *commercial* legislative rights, by stating a parallel case respecting *territorial* legislative rights. I will suppose, for instance, that some foreign state should make a grant of one of her provinces to the crown and parliament of Great Britain. Suppose France should offer to restore Normandy to Great Britain, upon certain conditions, which were, that as salt and tobacco form two great branches of the revenue of France, in order to prevent any injury which might arise to that revenue, his Most Christian Majesty should expressly stipulate, that all regulations and restrictions, respecting salt and tobacco, should be precisely the same in Normandy, as in the remainder of his dominions; and that the British parliament should adopt, with regard to Normandy, all the laws which he had made, or should make hereafter, respecting those two articles. In this case, the salt and tobacco, which Great Britain should send from her own ports to Normandy, would be subject to the laws made by the king of France, and afterwards registered by the parliament of Great Britain. And yet will any man say, that the stipulation upon which this grant was founded, was an invasion of the legislative rights of Great Britain?—Certainly not—because Normandy was not *within* the limits of the *jurisdiction* of the parliament of Great Britain.—It was not *within* the sphere of the authority of that parliament; it would certainly be a restriction of the *new authority* of the British legislature over a *new province*, but as certainly no invasion of their *rights*, for, as to Normandy, they had *no right*.

Thus when the trade to the British colonies and plantations was granted to Ireland, it was the grant of a new *province of trade*, which was not *within* the

the limits of the *jurisdiction* of the Irish legislature. The condition annexed to the grant certainly restrains the authority of the Irish legislature over this new province of trade, but it cannot be an invasion of their rights, for as to that trade, they had *no* right. There is another circumstance, my countrymen, to which I would have you advert.

By the condition annexed to the grant of this trade, Great Britain only requires our *consent* to do *that* for ourselves, which she could do of her *own authority* in *another way*, *without* our consent. Let us suppose she had admitted of our intercourse with her colonies and plantations *without* any stipulations *whatsoever*—is it in common sense to conceive that she would have admitted us to import into, and export from her colonies and plantations, upon better terms than she did herself—could we have the smallest reason to complain, if she imposed upon our exports to those countries the same burthens to which her own are now, or may hereafter be subject, or that she should burthen our imports from thence to the same amount, as her own imports are now, or may hereafter be subject to by the time they reach the British market?—And could she not do this of her own authority, by establishing duties in the *ports* of her colonies and plantations upon all commodities *imported* into them from *Ireland*, to the *same* amount as the similar commodities are now, or shall hereafter be charged with, upon their *exportation* from Great Britain to those colonies and plantations? And could she not also charge all commodities exported from the British colonies and plantations to *Ireland*, to the same amount as the similar commodities are now, or shall hereafter be charged with upon their *importation* into Great Britain, by imposing

a duty upon their exportation to this country, collected at her own ports in her colonies and plantations—and could she not, therefore, regulate and restrain our trade to those colonies and plantations both now and hereafter, to all intents and purposes, as completely and effectually, of her own authority, and *without* our consent, as she now requires us to *consent*, that we should regulate and restrain the *same* trade for ourselves—so that Great Britain's regulating in this manner *our* trade to *her* colonies and plantations, without our consent, would be *no* infringement of our legislative independence—But when she desires us to *consent* to regulate ourselves the *same* trade in the *same* manner, it is an infringement of our legislative independence!!! — There is besides, this difference between the two modes by which this trade may be regulated; had Great Britain adopted the former, all the *revenue* arising from the duties would have centered in the *British* treasury, whereas, by the latter mode it remains with *us*.

Now let me put this plain case—Suppose France should offer to receive colonial produce thro' Ireland, subject only to the same duties and regulations as are now, or shall hereafter be imposed upon the importation of the produce of her *own* colonies: I conceive this would be a very advantageous offer to Ireland.—But suppose France should afterwards say, in consequence of some benefit offered by us, we shall remit those duties upon the importation of colonial produce thro' Ireland, which have hitherto gone into our treasury, and Ireland shall retain the amount of them for her own use, upon condition, that she will agree to impose the same duties upon her export of colonial produce into France, as the produce of our own colonies is now, or may hereafter be liable

liable to pay upon its importation into France.---
 Now I conceive that this would be a still more advantageous offer than the former. It would be just making us a present of so much revenue, and that paid by the consumer in France; but, would any man alive say, that it was an infringement upon our legislative independency? As to the expression, that, "All British laws regulating this trade *should be in force* in Ireland, by laws to be past in the Parliament of that kingdom,"—I have only two objections to it—In the first place, it is *nonsense*; in the second, there is a want of delicacy towards the feelings of Ireland in it, that cannot fail to offend.—I say it is nonsense, because, even admitting that the Irish parliament does nothing more than register the law, yet still it is, *to that Registry* the law owes *its force*; till then the British law is, with respect to this country, a simple inoperative regulation which is of *no force*;—it is from its becoming an *Irish* law, that it is *in force*.—How then without a solecism can it be said, that the *British* law shall be *in force*?—I do not wish however to cavil at words; nor would I refuse an advantageous offer merely because the person who made it, expressed himself in nonsensical or unmannerly terms.—I will suppose the Dutch, for valuable considerations, (and otherwise the Dutch certainly would not do it) should make an offer to Great Britain of a share in their spice trade, and that the condition of the grant should, in the true spirit of Dutch breeding, run thus—"That all laws enacted by their *High Mightinesses* for regulating and restraining the trade to the Dutch Spice Islands *should be in force* in Great Britain." I dare say that in England they would have been better pleased had their *High Mightinesses* expressed themselves more civilly; by simply stating, that it was essential to
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the treaty, that the laws for regulating and restraining the spice trade, should be the *same* in Great Britain as in Holland. But I apprehend John Bull would import nutmegs notwithstanding.

I have hitherto taken no notice of the clause in this resolution stating, that the British laws for regulating and restraining the trade to the British colonies and plantations which Ireland is to adopt, must impose the same restraints, and confer the same benefits on the subjects of both kingdoms, because I think it has nothing to say to the constitutional question.—The laws are to be the *same* in both countries, regulating the *same* trade, only in *different* channels. Great Britain under this resolution can *not* make any laws, of which the share Ireland is to possess of the British colonial and plantation trade shall be the *direct* object;—her *own* trade to those colonies and plantations must be the *direct* object of those laws;—her *own* trade must be the *subject* upon which they are to operate.—They can affect Ireland only consequentially.—They must in the *first* instance affect Great Britain, who cannot therefore wound the Irish trade, but through her own; nor benefit her own, without communicating the same benefit to that of Ireland—I do not think, therefore, this clause absolutely necessary, for it follows from unavoidable implication—I have, however, no objection to it, as it may tend to put Ireland upon her guard, most carefully to examine and investigate every British law for regulating the trade in question, that they may be assured such law will have *identically the same operation* upon the British trade in the first instance, as consequentially upon her own. This may prevent any future attempt on the part of the

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the British parliament to injure, by a *side wind*, the colonial trade of Ireland—As it is possible (though not without a breach of national faith,) that Great Britain, under the pretence of regulating her own trade to the colonies, might pass a law, inoperative as to *her*, but, which, if adopted by Ireland, might operate to the injury of the *Irish* trade to the colonies. In which case I am bold to affirm Ireland might reject the law, without prejudice to the settlement.

I come now to another part of the same resolution, that which requires that the laws relative to the navigation of both kingdoms should be the *same* in both, as far as relates to the securing *exclusive* privileges to the ships and mariners of Great Britain, Ireland, and the British colonies and plantations, which is also guarded by the clause of equal benefits and equal restraints.—I have no other objection to this part of the resolution, than that I think it is an unnecessary stipulation for our doing that, which it was our interest to do, without any stipulation at all.

Viewed in this light, together with the ungracious manner in which the whole proposition is worded, it has the appearance of an affectation to dictate; of an idle display of the *weakness* of superior power and wealth, the more unpardonable as it was without meaning, and calculated to answer no one purpose upon the face of the earth.

This part of the resolution should have run thus:
 “ That it is highly important to the general interests of the British empire, that the ships and mariners of Great Britain, Ireland, and the British Colonies and Plantations, should all be entitled to the *same exclusive* privileges. We
 “ therefore

“ therefore agree, that by our laws, to be passed
 “ now or hereafter, all Irish ships and Irish sea-
 “ men, shall be entitled to the same exclusive pri-
 “ vileges as British ships and British seamen, pro-
 “ vided the parliament of Ireland shall agree to
 “ pass now and hereafter, exactly similar laws, for
 “ the purpose of conferring upon British ships and
 “ British seamen, the same exclusive privileges in
 “ Ireland, as are now, or shall hereafter be en-
 “ joyed by her own.” Could any Irishman breath-
 ing object to this? and yet it is neither more nor
 less than the precise meaning of that part of the 4th
 resolution, which relates to the navigation of the
 two countries. *

I must here enter my caveat respecting this re-
 solution, that I am reconciled to it solely upon this
 condition, that the term *Trade*, as it is there used,
 means *bona fide*, and by no possible construction
 can be supposed to mean any other trade, than the
 trade to the British colonies and plantations—The
 trade of Ireland with foreign powers, being as to
 the intent and meaning of this fourth proposition,
 totally, and without any subterfuge whatsoever,
 out of the question.

Upon this ground, and this ground alone, I
 admit it as being perfectly consonant to my fourth
 commercial principle—Upon any other, I should
 reject it with indignation.

The fifth and eighth resolutions are included in
 the fourth, and are simply regulations for putting

* It is to be observed that we have already by acts of our
 own, adopted all the provisions of the British Navigation Laws,
 as far as relates to conferring exclusive privileges upon the ships
 and seamen of Great Britain, Ireland, and of the British Colo-
 nies and Plantations.

the import and export trade of Great Britain, and that of Ireland, to and from the British colonies and settlements, upon the *same* footing with respect to duties and impositions. But I must here observe, that it is only upon raw materials imported from the British colonies and plantations, to be afterwards manufactured here, that Great Britain can in justice expect we should impose similar duties with the British. — Rum for instance should be excepted now, as it was in the settlement of 1780; for it cannot possibly be the smallest injury to her, that we should have it at a cheaper rate for our own consumption, than it can be got for in England. With respect to the raw materials imported from the British colonies into Ireland, that these should be subject to the same duties to which the same raw materials are subject, upon being imported into Great Britain, is perfectly fair; for it could not be expected that Great Britain should furnish us with raw materials from her own colonies, on better terms than she obtains them herself, in order to enable us, when those materials came to be manufactured, to undersell her in her own home market, as well as every where else. This therefore is perfectly consonant, not only to my fourth commercial principle—that where one country confers a trade upon the other, they should both enjoy such trade upon identically the same terms; but also to my first commercial principle—that the local interests of either kingdom, should never be pursued to the injury of the common interests of both.

It is true, that by the fifth resolution it is required of us, to impose the same duties and regulations upon the importation of the produce of foreign colonies, as the same produce is liable to upon being imported into Great Britain. This, at first sight,

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may appear to interfere with our foreign trade, and I own I do not think the stipulation necessary, for the following reasons:

1st. Because it might have been included in the sixteenth resolution, which follows, and than which nothing can be more fair, viz: "That the importation of articles from foreign countries, should be regulated from time to time in each kingdom, on such terms as may effectually favour the importation of similar articles of the growth, produce, or manufacture of the other, except in the case of materials of manufacture, which now are, or hereafter may be allowed to be imported from foreign countries duty free." I do not see why, under this resolution, which certainly ought to be a *first principle* of the connection between the two countries; a principle I have already stated in my fourth political, and second commercial positions, as essential to a settlement between the two countries; I say, I do not see why the produce of the British colonies and plantations, might not have been included, as coming within the spirit of it; and in that case, all offence which the mention of foreign countries might possibly give, would have been avoided.

2^{dly}. Because we have already, by acts of our own, confined ourselves to the produce of the British colonies, &c. to the exclusion of similar produce from foreign colonies, exactly to the same effect as is here required of us; so that it is a stipulation for us, to do *that*, which we have done *already*.

3^{dly}. Because if Ireland had agreed to confine herself in this manner, to the produce of the British colonies, notwithstanding the misconstruction of the

the navigation act, notwithstanding Great Britain *refused* her market to any colonial produce through Ireland, surely she cannot be less inclined to *continue* the same preference she before gave to the produce of those colonies, now that the navigation act is fairly interpreted; now that the British market is open to her for that produce, and when consequently she has the same interest with Great Britain in continuing such preference.

However as it might have been necessary to reconcile the people of Great Britain to the opening of their market to colonial produce through Ireland, and as under this liberty, Ireland might easily have introduced there, at a lower rate, the produce of foreign colonies, to the ruin of those of Great Britain, she had perhaps a right to require some security from Ireland, effectually to prevent so dangerous a consequence to the prosperity of her own colonies.

If it be said, that it was before optional with us, to exclude or admit, as we thought proper, the produce of foreign colonies, and that it will not be so under this settlement, which will be a restriction of *our* legislative authority; I answer neither will it be optional in Great Britain, to *refuse* the produce of her colonies through Ireland, which will be a restriction of *her* legislative authority.

The same argument equally applies to such parts of the produce of the North American states, (which by the bye ought to be enumerated) as can be produced from the British colonies.

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The sixth and seventh resolutions contain mere regulations to prevent illicit practices and smuggling, between the two countries.

I come now to the ninth resolution. The *principle* of this resolution is exactly the same as that upon which the preference we are to give to the British colonies and plantations in America is founded: — But there is this difference between the eastern and western foreign possessions of Great Britain; she is not herself mistress of the former,—a *tenant*, if I may use the expression, has got a *lease* of them,—and during the term of that lease she cannot herself infringe any of the clauses it contains; she can therefore give us no privileges in the territories which are in the occupancy of that tenant, but she makes the same stipulations in favour of her tenant, that she would for herself.—She cannot allow us to trade there, for it is not in her power; but she can permit the tenant to import goods, the growth, produce and manufacture of Ireland, into his territories; which by a clause in the lease, he was before precluded from doing,—and this permission she has given.

But to drop the metaphor: whoever considers how much the strength, prosperity, and, I might almost say, the fate of Great Britain, are interwoven with the interests of the East India Company, must perceive that every preference given to that company, is a preference given to Great Britain herself.

It is true that we are precluded from trading to the East Indies, by a very sweeping clause indeed, we are not to pass beyond the Cape of Good Hope.

Whereas

Whereas tho' we give the same preference to the products of the British possessions on the western continent that we do *now*, and are required *hereafter* to give to the goods imported by the British East India Company, yet there are *other parts* of the Western continent, with which we can trade, and with which we have the same *right* to trade as Great Britain herself. Why then should we be excluded from trading with those countries in the East Indies which are not in the possession of Great Britain?—I confess I see no reason for this *express* exclusion, for there was not the smallest necessity for it. The same end would have been answered, without this *affectation* of control.—There is this essential difference between the trade to the East Indies, and that to the Western continent. The East India company import from the East *all* the articles of European consumption. The possessions of Great Britain on the western continent do *not* produce all the articles of European consumption;—we consequently trade to the western continent without *detriment* to the preference we now give and *ought* to give to the produce of the British colonies and plantations,—for there are many articles of the produce of that continent, which would not come *within* an enumeration of the particulars of the produce of the British colonies. But the East Indies produce *no* articles of trade, which would not come within an enumeration of the particulars of the imports of the East India Company: consequently we could not import any of those articles from any other countries in the East Indies, or thro' any other medium but the East India Company, without detriment to the preference we now give, and which, from my fourth political fundamental principle of connection between the two countries, “ That they should mutually give each other every possible assistance,
“ advantage

“ advantage and support,” we *ought* to give to the imports of the British East India Company:—consequently it would have been sufficient to have *enumerated the principal articles* of the imports of the East India Company, to which Great Britain had a right to expect that Ireland should give a preference, over *similar* imports from the possessions of any foreign power, native or European in the East, to have effectually secured the East India Company.—Who would have thought of trading from this kingdom beyond the Cape of Good Hope, to countries from whence they were not to import *tea, cottons, calicoes, muslins, &c. &c.*?—It is perfectly consonant to the fundamental principles of the connection between the sister kingdoms, that each should effectually favour the other in preference to foreign states, in all articles that can be provided for her by the sister kingdom; consequently the enumeration of the articles I have mentioned, the importation of which Ireland does now, and would of course hereafter *effectually* favour, would have been quite sufficient for the security of the East India Company, without having recourse to an expedient, which, to unthinking and uninformed men, appears a much greater restriction than in fact it really is;—the effect, as to Ireland, would have been precisely the *same*, only produced in a manner that would not have given offence.—However, as I am certain Ireland *loses* nothing by the ninth resolution, *as long as* Great Britain has, or shall have, any possessions in the East Indies, I shall make no farther comment upon it; excepting, that as Great Britain lost America by one revolution, she may lose her possessions in the East Indies by another, I shall take it for granted, the whole of this ninth resolution will in that case, *ipso facto*, become totally null and void.

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The tenth and eleventh resolutions are exactly conformable to my second commercial principle, that each country should confer upon the other every commercial benefit in her power, and will remove one of the instances I have already stated, in which Great Britain (as the countries are at this day circumstanced) departs totally from that principle; these resolutions open her ports to us for all our manufactures upon the same terms as ours are to be open to her manufactures—and by the tenth, we shall immediately gain an advantage to our breweries by an additional duty upon English beer of one shilling and three-pence.

The twelfth resolution contains merely regulations, consequent upon the two resolutions immediately preceding it.

I come now to those resolutions, which are, in my opinion, of the first importance, and highest advantage to this country; I mean the thirteenth and fourteenth—It is unnecessary to state them, for they are in every body's hands. I can now congratulate my friends, the linen manufacturer, the Cork merchant, the manufacturers of leather, and of glass, and the brewer—that the export of their manufactures, and the import of their raw materials, will be for ever *secured* from duties by Great Britain—our linens, and her bark, coals, rock salt, malt, hops, tin and iron, for ever safe to Ireland, from the *power* of the British legislature, or even the necessities of a country sinking under the weight of taxes, upon every article of her own produce, for her own consumption.

This, my countrymen, is the *Security*, which has been long one of the first objects of my wishes,—as being one of the most essential to the lasting commercial

commercial prosperity of this country. I thank God I have lived to see the day when it is in the power of my countrymen to obtain it for themselves and their posterity.

Should it be said that England derives *equal* advantages from these resolutions, I shall entreat my readers to recollect what I have stated in a former part of this letter, respecting the balance of trade between the two kingdoms, and how little we should gain by the doctrine of retaliation, and they must see what small grounds there are for this assertion.

As to the fifteenth resolution, it contains nothing but regulations naturally arising from the preceding resolutions.

The sixteenth establishes the principle I have laid down in my second fundamental commercial position, viz. That each country should effectually favour the produce of the other, in preference to a similar produce from foreign countries—and in speaking of the fifth resolution, I have already stated what I had farther to observe respecting this resolution.

The seventeenth, eighteenth, and nineteenth resolutions are perfectly fair; the two first were become necessary from the tenth resolution, which puts an end to all prohibitions on the importation of the produce of either country into the other.

As to the twentieth resolution, it being in fact a part of the second, I shall reserve my objections to it till I shall give the following concise view of the whole

whole system, together with the conditions upon which alone, my countrymen, I think you can in honour accede to it.

Of the twenty British resolutions, six, viz. the 5th, 6th, 7th, 8th, 12th, and 15th, are either included in, or contain nothing but meer regulations consequent upon other resolutions. Three others, the 17th, 18th, and 19th, relate, the two first to patents and copy rights, and the last to fisheries, — so that in fact there are but eleven fundamental propositions; which include the whole system of the final settlement.

These eleven propositions are all formed upon the three following *principles* of connection and commercial intercourse between the sister kingdoms.

1st. That each country should give to the other every advantage, assistance, and support in the power of either, in order to forward their common interests.

2dly. That each country should consequently give to the produce of the other the most effectual preference over the similar produce of foreign countries.

3dly. That this principle should reach to the produce also, of the foreign and colonial possessions of Great Britain, with a full participation to Ireland of all the advantages of trading to those possessions upon precisely the *same terms*, as those upon which Great Britain enjoys that trade herself — save only an exception in favour of the East India company.

Upon these three principles it is that a free commercial intercourse is to be carried on between the two countries, reciprocally upon the *same terms*, without *future* prohibitions or duties, either upon manufactures or raw materials—and these objects are obtained, by the 10th, 11th, 13th, and 14th resolutions.—Upon the same principles it is that Ireland is to trade to the British colonies and plantations, precisely on the *same terms* as Great Britain herself—and that the navigation act shall in both countries have the same interpretation—And these objects are obtained by the third resolution.

Upon the same principles is founded the sixteenth resolution, which has for its object, that each country should *effectually favour* the produce of the other.—I have already given my opinion of the ninth resolution, which includes the exception in favour of the East India company—and the first resolution simply states the expediency of an equitable commercial intercourse between the two kingdoms.

There remains only, for me to say, a few words upon the 2d, 4th, and 20th resolutions.

The 2d and 20th resolutions having one and the same object, I shall consider both as one and the same resolution.

I have not the smallest objection to granting to Great Britain out of any surplus arising to the hereditary revenue from the extension of our trade under this settlement, an aid towards defraying in time of peace the expences of protecting the trade and general interests of the empire. Conscious that we can never have a fleet, which we can properly call *our own*, I have stated on a former occasion—that I was desirous of acquiring
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for Ireland, a specific claim, or positive right to call upon the fleet of Great Britain, to protect the Irish flag in time of peace; and such right or claim, our contributing to the expences of that fleet, in the manner proposed, will most assuredly give us.

But there are two conditions upon which alone I will accede to the second and twentieth resolutions.

The first is, that a *perpetual revenue bill*, for the collection of the hereditary revenue, as the words "The due collection thereof being secured by *permanent provisions*," seem to imply, must be wholly out of the question; as we cannot, without a direct attack upon the constitution, give any other security in this respect to Great Britain, than that the collection of the *hereditary revenue*, shall be secured in the *same* manner, as that of the *additional duties*.

The second is, that I will not depart from the meaning and intent of the original eleventh proposition as it left Ireland—the object of which was, that the surplus of the hereditary revenue, should go in aid of the expences attending the British fleet, only in case our *own* expences had not exceeded the estimate annually to be given in of their probable amount—such surplus being first applicable to make good any exceeding of our expences beyond such estimate.

As to the *fourth* resolution, I again repeat, that I accede to that, only in case it shall prove to bear *the individual construction* I have already put upon it.—From that construction it must not vary in the minutest point. I have already shewn, on a former occasion, how that part of it which relates to the

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the navigation laws, ought to have been *worded*—and to its meaning so *worded*, I adhere. I shall now state how that part of it relative to the trade to the British colonies and plantations, ought also to have been worded; and it is only in the *sense* it will bear so *worded*, that I agree to adopt it. “Resolved, That it is highly important to the general interests of the British empire, that the trade between Ireland and the British colonies in America, the West Indies, and British settlements on the coast of Africa, should be enjoyed, and have continuance so long, and in such case only, as the goods to be imported from the said colonies, plantations or settlements, into Ireland, or to be exported from Ireland to the said colonies, plantations or settlements, shall be liable to equal duties and drawbacks, and be subject to the same securities, regulations, and restrictions, as the like goods are liable or subject to, upon being imported from the said colonies, plantations, or settlements, into Great Britain, or exported from thence to such colonies, plantations, or settlements, respectively.”

This, my friends and countrymen, I take to be the true meaning of the fourth proposition, as far as relates to trade—in this sense alone, it is consistent with your honour to adopt it; and if it shall be found to bear this sense, and *no other*—I trust the ungracious and absurd *wording* of it, which I can never sufficiently lament, as a most unaccountable piece of folly—as being calculated to produce no one possible end, but that of exciting jealousies and discontents; I trust, I say, that this circumstance, mischievous only as to its effects upon your feelings, but harmless as to your trade, will not prevent your reaping the many substantial benefits to be derived from the proposed settlement,

ment, every one of which I should advise you to reject with indignation, if by any possible construction, any other meaning can be given to the fourth proposition, both with respect to trade and navigation, than that I have now attributed to it, with regard to the former, and have already attributed to it on another occasion, with regard to the latter.

I shall then rejoice, that I have lived long enough to see, the accomplishment of my wishes for your commercial security and prosperity.

FINIS.